

THE CANADIANS OF OLD

BY PHILIPPE-JOSEPH AUBERT DE GASPÉ



READ FOR **LibriVox** BY BRUCE PIRIE

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Read by Bruce Pirie. Total running time: 09:30:01

In his mid-70s, Philippe-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé took on the project of recording the culture and heritage of French Canada, especially that of the late 1700s, the world of his youth. The result, published in French in 1863, was the historical fiction *Les Anciens Canadiens* (literally “The Canadians of Old”).

In this book, inspired by the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott, Aubert de Gaspé collects the customs, traditions, folk tales, superstitions, and songs of the Quebec people, weaves in memories of life in his own ancestral home, and sets all this within the momentous historical events that transformed Canada in the 18th century. Much of the book is historically accurate, based sometimes on the author’s own experiences and sometimes on memories passed on to him by eyewitnesses. For example, the account of being sent to debtor’s prison came from the author’s own experience.

The book’s storyline hinges on the British Conquest of Quebec in 1759 and the ensuing trauma caused to French Canada. Fictional characters are intertwined with historical figures such as a famous shipwreck survivor and specific military officers. This book is an engaging window on cultural history and one of the first great works of French Canadian literature.

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